



**BILL HASLAM**  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF TENNESSEE  
**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**  
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NASHVILLE, TN 37243-0375

**CANDICE MCQUEEN**  
COMMISSIONER

December 14, 2018

Mr. Dorsey Hopson  
Shelby County Schools  
160 S. Hollywood St.  
Memphis, TN 38112

Dear Director Hopson,

Since 2012, Tennessee has identified its lowest performing 5 percent of schools and awarded grants to districts and schools to implement plans for turnaround. As we developed our continuum of intervention and support for our lowest performing schools in our state Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan, much of what we have learned is embedded in our model. First and foremost, we know that improving low-performing schools is challenging work and requires additional capacity, funding, and opportunity to innovate. Tennessee's theory of action is an evidence-based one that will guide the priorities for the state's turnaround efforts.

Tennessee's system of performance management for Priority and Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) schools will continue to operate through our school improvement continuum and be supported by the Office of School Improvement (OSI). The continuum defines three tracks of intervention for Priority and CSI schools identified for multiple factors.

In [guidance](#) released earlier this year, the department outlined that 2017-18 TNReady data would not be used to identify schools for the 2018 Priority list. The department also released additional [information](#) regarding Priority school designations this summer. These documents explain that schools named to the 2018 Priority school list would continue on the intervention tracks designated following the 2016-17 school year. The information below provides additional detail around the specifics of intervention track decisions for the 2018-19 school year.

#### **Alpha Track:**

For 2018-19, only the schools designated as Alpha track last year that still appear on the 2018 Priority list will be designated as Alpha track. Schools will continue in the specific intervention that was designated for them last year. There will be an annual proof point at the end of the 2018-19 school year where progress will be evaluated, and it will be determined whether the schools remain Alpha, change interventions, or move to the Beta track.

For 2019-20 and beyond, Alpha track will include Priority schools that have been identified on the two most recent Priority Lists and have earned a composite TVAAS score of 3 or less in the two most recent years. These schools are eligible for the state-led intervention by the Achievement School District (ASD). Schools in the Alpha track are reviewed based on feeder pattern, success rank/rate, graduation rate, and other relevant indicators to determine whether Alpha 1 or Alpha 2 is the more appropriate track of intervention. Schools identified as Alpha 1 will begin planning for ASD intervention. Schools identified as Alpha 2 will implement a specific intervention as determined by the Commissioner which may include district-led charter conversion, continuing a current intervention, closure, shared governance, or ASD planning.

**Beta Track:**

For 2018-19, only the schools designated as Beta track last year that still appear on the 2018 Priority list will be designated as Beta track. There will be an annual proof point at the end of the 2018-19 school year where progress will be evaluated and it will be determined whether the schools remain on the Beta track or move to the Alpha track and become eligible for the ASD.

For 2019-20 and beyond, Beta track will include Priority schools that have been identified on the two most recent Priority lists and demonstrate evidence of improvement or progress. These schools are not immediately eligible for the ASD and will work in partnership with TDOE to ensure that the plan for intervention is appropriate based on identified need and level of evidence.

**Delta Track:**

The following schools will be classified as Delta track:

- Priority schools that have been identified on one Priority list.
- Schools identified on the Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) schools list, that are not also identified on the 2018 Priority list, and have not previously been identified as a Priority school will be placed on the Delta track.

These schools will undergo a rigorous school improvement planning process and will implement new, district-led, evidence-based interventions. These schools are not immediately eligible for the ASD.

**Delta Plus Track:**

The following schools will be classified as Delta Plus track for the 2018-19 school year:

- Schools that were identified for the first time on the 2015 Priority list and classified as Delta track schools for 2017-18 that also appear on the 2018 Priority list.
- Schools that were previously identified on the 2012 or 2015 Priority lists but exited and now appear on the 2018 Priority list.
- Schools identified on the CSI list, that are not also identified on the 2018 Priority list but have previously identified as a Priority school on either the 2012 or 2015 Priority lists.

Delta Plus schools will also undergo a rigorous planning process and implement district-led, evidence-based interventions. Following the 2018-19 school year there will be an annual proof point for Delta Plus track schools, at which time, progress will be evaluated, and the school will move to either the Beta or Alpha tracks.

The current Priority and CSI schools in the Shelby County School District will be on the following intervention tracks for the 2018-19 school year.

Priority School	Intervention Track
American Way Middle	Alpha 1 or Alpha 2—Continue Current Intervention +
City University School Girls Preparatory	Delta
Craigmont Middle	Delta
DuBois Elementary School of Arts Technology	Delta
DuBois High of Leadership Public Policy	Delta
DuBois High School of Arts Technology	Delta
DuBois Middle of Leadership Public Policy	Delta
DuBois Middle School of Arts Technology	Delta
Dunbar Elementary	Delta
Geeter Middle	Alpha 2--Continue Current Intervention*
Georgian Hills Middle	Delta Plus
Getwell Elementary	Delta

Granville T. Woods Academy of Innovation Charter School	Delta
Hamilton High	Alpha 2--Continue Current Intervention*
Hawkins Mill Elementary	Alpha 2--Closure***
Magnolia Elementary	Alpha 2--Continue Current Intervention**
Manassas High	Delta Plus
Memphis Delta Preparatory Charter School	Delta
Northwest Prep Academy	Delta Plus
Robert R. Church Elementary	Delta
Sheffield Elementary	Beta
Sheffield High	Delta
The Excel Center	Delta
Trezevant High	Alpha 2--Continue Current Intervention*
Westwood High	Beta
Winchester Elementary	Delta
Wooddale High	Delta Plus
Woodstock Middle School	Delta

\*For those schools designated as Alpha 2-Continue current intervention, the state will engage with the district to receive frequent progress reports and conduct school visits to monitor school progress during the remainder of this school year.

\*\*The state is aware that Magnolia Elementary is currently undergoing a consolidation plan with Alcy Elementary and results and enrollment for the combined school will be tracked.

\*\*\*For schools recommended as Alpha 2 closure, the district shall provide a response and timeline for board action to the state.

+Results from the 2018-19 school year will be reviewed to determine the effectiveness of the iZone intervention and begin possible ASD planning if necessary.

The Office of School Improvement will continue to provide support via grant opportunities and other professional learning resources, like the upcoming Turnaround Principal Cohort. When student achievement data is released in Summer 2019, each school's status and/or intervention track will be re-assessed and a new intervention track may be determined.

We appreciate your district's efforts to provide support and resources for improving outcomes for Priority and CSI school students and look forward to partnering with you in these efforts. Please feel free to reach out to our executive director, Ginnae Harley ([Ginnae.Harley@tn.gov](mailto:Ginnae.Harley@tn.gov)), of the Office of School Improvement with any questions you might have.

Sincerely,



Dr. Candice McQueen  
Commissioner of Education